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CHILDREN

THEIR MODELS AND CRITICS

BY

AURETTA ROYS ALDRICH

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE
1893

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TO

MY BELOVED CHILDREN

WHO HAVE TAUGHT ME

THE BLESSEDNESS OF MOTHERHOOD

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS

Lovingly Inscribed

PREFACE

During many years of experience with classes, and in close personal relations with mothers, I have learned that their proverbial devotion and unselfishness have not been overdrawn; indeed, have never been half told; and my respect, love, and admiration for them have increased with the years.

And I have found the desire so general and so genuine among them for more light in regard to the needs and best interests of children that I venture to add this little contribution—the substance, in part, of my talks with them—towards directing thought in a

wider circle, if this little book shall find it, to the very early years of childhood as the vital ones for consistent and successful character-building.

Grateful to mothers for precious inspiration in my work, I am glad if, offering my teaspoonful to the ocean of need for humanity, I can lighten by so much any weight of doubt or anxiety from the mother-heart of the world.

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I

CHILDREN

ALL effort since time began can be justified only in the service of men. It seems easy to believe that the universe exists, that worlds and systems of worlds revolve in their countless orbits, only to serve man, when we contemplate his god-like possibilities. And these possibilities lie folded not in the grown man, but in the child—the baby. If this is true, surely we, being his models and teachers, may bend reverently to learn his need and our best means of supplying it.

Our consciousness of deeper truths underlying education than we have yet made use of strengthens with advancing civilization. We are feeling, as never before, that the one great need, in the State, in business, and in the home, is character. The great questions of to-day do not relate to science or philosophy, but to social needs. Nations are convulsed and thrones are tottering with the mighty throb of unrest pulsing through every avenue of society, and the birth of larger thought and higher aspiration is making these closing years of the nineteenth century an epoch in the history of nations. To solve the problems before us we must have men and women whose emotions spring from pure and honest hearts, and whose activities are the result of intelligent and conscientious direction. This statement leaves out of our calcula-

tion the immense number of paupers, criminals, and other state wards and private dependants whose irresponsibility increases our duties beyond computation; and the pity of it is that we are so used to this state of society, which makes self-defence, correction, and restraint the principal work of life, that only in an exceptional moment do we realize the difference between what is and what might be.

Business men have their boards, ministers their conferences, teachers their conventions, and politicians their caucuses; and these bodies of men and women discuss finance and business interests, the most effectual way of bringing the wayward and sinful into the fold, the best methods of instruction in the various branches of study, and the chances of electing "our" candidates for office. And almost everything else is discussed that promises

to undo, to control, or regulate the mistakes, mischiefs, and unfortunate conditions of life. Recognizing fully these important offices, and many other phases of helpful work, it is still true that all these are reformatory or charitable, and not primarily preventive, in the sense of beginning with the baby to systematically arm and educate him for defence or attack. No body of men and women make it a business to trace back to their sources, with the view of preventing, rather than curing, enduring, or punishing the helplessness, misery, and crime that have called forth our gigantic charities, that tax legislation in vain for adjustment, and baffle our best efforts to protect ourselves.

Yet it is our little children who are making society, and who will soon be on the highway of life, walking worthily and helpfully onward, or filling

our almshouses, penitentiaries, insane asylums, and prisons, according to the direction we give to their lives. Leaving out the exceptional cases in human life, before the mystery of which we must bow in all humility, confessing our limitations, we do believe that society is *made*. The next generation lies like plastic clay in our hands. The babies of a few short years ago now pass their wasted lives in our State institutions, or struggle outside with poverty and temptation. The tramps, the thriftless workers, whose work, where we get it, is anything but good; the hundreds of defaulters who are exposed, and the thousands who tamper with doubtful ways as yet undiscovered; the army of business men, unsuccessful and discouraged because out of place or untrained for their work—all these were the victims of their environment. They did not

choose to come into the world, nor select the homes into which they came. Can any one doubt the difference to these unfortunates if half the money, time, and thought now spent in supporting them and defending ourselves from their mistakes had been spent in loving, intelligent care of their bodies, brains, and hearts, at the time when every habit of life is getting its direction ?

Science is devoted to the cure of all the ills of body and mind. Surely the next step may well be the science of prevention.

Our very love for our own little ones seems to blind us to the need of law in regard to them, and in society we are so occupied with trying to protect ourselves, and in feeding and clothing the needy, that there seems little time for new phases of work ; but we must find time to form society

as well as to protect and punish it, or we and our children after us must spend all of life in the unsuccessful effort to re-form it.

A knowledge of concrete things, and the ability to use and control them wisely, must be a part of the unconscious education of children if we would have them self-reliant and self-respecting. By this method only can power be directed, as it develops, to form a habit of reaction between brain and fingers. The awakened power of to-day must be adjusted to proper uses to-day, or it loses force, and interferes with to-morrow's awakened power; and confusion results. We know how some little trick of the baby, if noticed and encouraged, will be repeated again and again, till it becomes habit; and the accumulation of these habits is character.

Why do we not use this lever in the

education of our children, and put our best efforts at the beginning? For, however we may be blinded by ignorance of child-life, or the habit of accepting things as we find them, there can be, as a rule, no divorce between the education we give our children—beginning at birth—and the result in mature life.

Your rose-bush will not grow vigorously and produce fine roses unless conditions have been fulfilled which will secure that result. The success of our children's lives is secured or hindered through the same law of demand and supply, cause and effect. To learn this law in its relation to human growth is the highest of all studies, and yet within the reach of all.

You and I, unless skilled in gardening, could not be trusted to go into a garden where choice seeds had been

planted to pull up the weeds, for a thistle or poisonous plant looks just as confidently up for sunshine and dew, and is to the uninitiated eye just as inviting in appearance, as are the plants whose later growth will give us beauty and fragrance instead of poison and thorns.

It is so with the awakening powers of the human being. Each new evidence of intelligence in the baby is delightful to us all. Even the peremptory demands of the baby-will, which, later, crystallized out of harmony with his best nature, are so disagreeable, only show he is the monarch he has a right to be; for we all have a kingdom as our birthright. Science, philosophy, the arts and trades, in endless variety, offer full scope to every individual capacity. But who of us, without wisdom, without careful, consecrated study, can lead

the new-born king to the possession and control of his rightful kingdom?

A child may be very destructive, as we say, and so give endless annoyance and anxiety, but with anointed eyes we might often see in this tendency a great power of analysis, which needs only to be understood to secure grand results. Instead of the stereotyped "don't," or words which imply censure or at least impatience, and furnishing liberally the meaningless and unnatural toys that are an imposition upon children's good sense, let material worthy of the child be given, which can be taken to pieces and reconstructed, so that synthesis may lead him to love analysis as a means to new creations—not as an end. Thus, instead of crystallizing his peculiarity into a fault, it is made the basis of ever-new pleasure and power, and he is led through it to a higher level. And what is more im-

portant even than rescuing this virtue to him, the parents or teachers put themselves into that sympathy with the child which alone can make advice welcome.

None of us can fail to see that the attitude towards our children which makes them feel that their interests and ours are at variance is the fatal barrier, widening with advancing years, so that the multitude of questions that confront children on the threshold of youth are pushed back into silence, and produce morbid conditions, or are talked over with playmates, whose immature solutions and counsel are misleading and harmful. The long list of mischiefs growing out of these misplaced confidences may be partly comprehended, but never fully measured.

Oh, fathers and mothers, as you value purity and integrity, guard this

avenue to your children's hearts by sympathetic appreciation.

Few of us are such geniuses that our lives can be successful unless care, nurture, and direction have been given in the forming period of life. And the few who have reached success in spite of misunderstanding, neglect, or opposition, have done so because, as Schiller says, "With Genius stands Nature in eternal union. What the one promises, the other is certain to perform." Nature will not be thwarted when she has a plan in hand, but she leaves a host of things for us to manage and reap the reward or penalty.

In the same poem, "Columbus," Schiller says, completing the thought, that had no continent existed, one would have arisen in obedience to his genius and faith.

If this is a poetic flight in regard to a continent, it is much more than

that in its application to children, for there is a faith which is creative, through sympathy and a personal spiritual atmosphere, and also because it so informs the body that hands and tongue are quick to do its bidding. But how the world groans for want of this faith, while we, in our ignorance or indifference, go on planting that which is unsightly when it is grown !

A very important part of children's education lies in and through the imagination. You all know how a bright-colored ball will serve as bird or butterfly, flower or fruit, and papa's cane as a horse, and you can see how much better these substitutes, idealized by the baby imagination, are to lead him to his true relations with these things, later, than are the real bird, butterfly, and horse.

There is vital meaning in children's

natural activities, and spontaneous, well-ordered play is a mighty power in education. Indeed, development, to be complete, must be rooted in this play. Our kindergartens do not all bear witness to the value of this natural play, for the new wine of child-gardening is, of necessity, put into old bottles. We are all so saturated with the idea that the sooner the child stops playing and learns names and facts the wiser he will be, that even kindergartners need a deeper baptism. It is hard for us to believe that it is experience, not the alphabet, that is the basis of all knowledge. But we are beginning to learn that a joyous, orderly play-time is the best part of education and the strongest foundation for future attainment, and that in it and all it involves lies the solution of our educational problem.

Children are naturally truthful and

generous; and what a comment it is on our attitude towards them that they so often become otherwise before they reach the school age! Children shrink from censure, and soon learn to try to hide their mistakes to avoid being blamed. Besides, many loving, intelligent parents deceive their children by act if not by word; and even a baby takes in this sort of thing as something to be tried, and if he is bright will return it fourfold. We also judge their baby prattle and reasoning from our standpoint, not from their ideal world, and so accuse them of that of which they were entirely innocent, thus awakening and emphasizing what we would prevent. It takes wise insight to detect the difference between a half-developed good that we ought to let alone and a fault that we should correct.

A friend once told me that she did

not know what to do with her little boy, four years old, who had for the last few days been telling all sorts of untruths, with no reason or sense in them. For instance, that morning she told him she did not want him to carry out, as he had been doing through the winter, his little basket of apples to share with his playmates, as the apples were nearly gone. Two or three hours after, she heard his little feet on the cellar stairs. She went out, and saw him coming up the stairs with his basket of apples.

"Why, Eben, did I not tell you not to bring up any more apples for the children?"

"Yes, 'm," answered the little fellow, pursuing his way.

"Why do you bring them, then?"

"I'm not bringing them," said he.

"Is not that a basket of apples you have in your hand?"

"Yes, 'm."

"Well, then, you are bringing up apples, as I told you not to, are you not?"

"No, mamma," he said, with an honest expression of face.

She was shocked at his deliberate and stupid untruth, and also that he should seem so indifferent about it. The child was, and is now that he is grown, perfectly honest and truthful; but here was a phase of development when the refraction of mental rays produced this crooked result in his mind. The prime element of untruth is deception, and here was no intention to deceive.

No baby, when he first begins to handle his playthings, can tell how many two and two make, and if any of you have watched the process of solving such questions in the infant mind, you have, I am sure, felt, as I

have, that their solution was as great a revelation to the baby as was the law of gravitation to Newton when he saw the apple fall. Ideas, facts, and their relations do not come full-grown to any of us, and when half grasped by the baby, often present the most singular combination of fact and fancy, reality, and imagination. Children who are more reflective than intuitive are beset on every hand with paradoxes, and trying ones, too, growing out of this characteristic of development.

Miss Peabody says she well remembers that if a reason for anything was asked of her, and she answered "'Cause," it meant to her a complete and unanswerable justification of everything. She says she never had a greater puzzle presented to her than when, upon giving this satisfactory reason, it was said, "Why do you

say ''cause'? That is no reason." To her there was no appeal from this all-comprehending word, and she had rested in it, only to be suddenly jostled out of her repose into hopeless wonder. What could they mean? It was so clear to her; why could not others see?

Every baby, to a greater or less extent, repeats the history of the race, and it is wisdom to let him be his own inventor and discoverer as far as his genius and our encouragement will lead him to be. To secure this, his ideas and efforts to express them should be respected, however crude and unlike ours they may be.

Nothing is half so charming as to really study children in this unfolding period; but if we would learn of their needs so as to help them we must take the shoes from off our feet, for this is holy ground. And as yet we do not

understand the process of development; we *mis*understand it. And we also forget that, like an earnest, honest seeker into the mysteries of science or art, the child must solve and resolve his problems by the light of each day's new experience.

At the age of three or four years Miss Peabody went with friends into a stranger's house, and was left in the parlor alone for a few minutes. She noticed some knitting on the sofa, and, taking it up, pulled a needle from the stitches, with pleased surprise and wonder as each stitch slipped from the needle. Then, when she tried to put the needle back again, she was overwhelmed to see that she had done what she could not undo. She was so scared she went and covered herself in the window drapery; not in the fear of exposure, for she did not think of that, but in humiliation because she

could not put the needle back again as she found it. She had eaten fruit from the tree of knowledge, and went and hid herself. So much was aroused in her by that one act that she seemed to have lived years in the experience of those few moments. She had learned how the stitches slipped off, only to be confronted by the impossible putting on.

Most of us, doubtless, especially if the knitting were ours, would say that the child was meddlesome, and knew, or ought to have known, better. And we should have reproved her, instead of helping her over this hard lesson, and making it a triumph and an onward and upward step by showing how the stitches could be taken up, how each stitch was made and slipped from needle to needle, thus enriching and dignifying as well as teaching.

We should be astonished, if not ap-

palled, if we could see in figures the number of times the average child is unnecessarily censured during the first seven years of life—years which ought to be full of observation, discovery, and experiment, unhindered by opposition.

Self-consciousness poisons nearly all our lives, and is often mistaken for modesty, when in reality it is consummate egoism, which grew into our lives before we were old enough to know or be responsible for it. Is it any wonder that so few of us are at "leisure from ourselves," when all our baby acts are so closely watched and commented upon? Unconsciously the baby learns that he is the centre of all the world he knows, and he therefore does everything for the approval of his audience. For two or three years this looks very attractive, and as harmless as does the tender green of a poi-

sonous plant, but later it is disagreeable to see, and interferes with all the child's doings; and effect and appearance, rather than the joy of what he can accomplish, are the incentives or hinderances to his work.

Self-defence is the necessary guardian of our life, noble in its proper place and proportions, and divine when it includes humanity, which always needs defenders. But it is often an armed and resistant force against the best that life offers. Self-consciousness is, as we have seen, early and unduly developed, and as soon as it has grown to be less charming is met with repression and opposition, especially by the boy, with his more boisterous activities. Native dignity and self-defence are at this stage constantly excited, and are therefore overgrown, and become obstinacy and selfishness, while reason and judgment have been

kept in the background and hindered. What wonder if they lag behind all though life?

Our love must be wise if we would win, for when Love and Thought lose each other our sorrow is likely to be "past all balsam or relief." The mother's love will not keep her child well, except as it prompts her to search out and obey the laws of his physical nature. Neither will her love make a good boy of him, unless it unites with wise methods for developing will and intelligence, so that they shall support each other. The will to do is simply power, but it is potent for good or evil just in proportion as it is directed by wisdom and love. And this direction must first be given by another, and be transferred unconsciously to the child. Nothing is worthy the name of education which does not include this self-direction.

"Mortals!" thus Time, weaving, sings,
"Bright or dark the web shall be
As ye will it; all the tissues
Blending in harmonious issues,
Or discordant colorings.
Time the shuttle drives, but you
Give to every thread its hue,
And elect your destiny.

"God bestowed the shining warp;
Fill it with as bright a woof,
And the whole shall glow divinely
As if wrought by angels finely
To the music of the harp;
And the blended colors be
Like perfected harmony
Keeping evil things aloof."

II

"COME, LET US LIVE WITH OUR CHILDREN"

"COME, let us live with our children." This little word "with," derived from two Anglo-Saxon words meaning *to be* and *to join*, furnishes one of the best illustrations of nice distinctions of meaning which make the English language so rich in expression.

No other word could express that perfect unity which should exist between the parent and the child—the mature and the infant mind—as this one does.

"For" is sometimes used in the place of "with," but it makes quite another thing of this motto so dear to the hearts of Froebel's followers. We do, indeed, often try to live for our children—to bear their sorrows and hardships, out of our deepest love, and we do for them many things which they ought to do for themselves, because this is easier for us than to teach them and wait for them to learn. But this is the opposite of living with them.

Individuality of sorrow, of loss, and of disappointment, as well as of need, is one of the most precious as well as mysterious qualities of life, and suggests the infinity of resource from which to draw our supply of help, of comfort and uplifting. When we live *with* the children, we honor this individuality and walk hand in hand with them, to their and our supply. The

natural activities, and spontaneous, well-ordered play is a mighty power in education. Indeed, development, to be complete, must be rooted in this play. Our kindergartens do not all bear witness to the value of this natural play, for the new wine of child-gardening is, of necessity, put into old bottles. We are all so saturated with the idea that the sooner the child stops playing and learns names and facts the wiser he will be, that even kindergartners need a deeper baptism. It is hard for us to believe that it is experience, not the alphabet, that is the basis of all knowledge. But we are beginning to learn that a joyous, orderly play-time is the best part of education and the strongest foundation for future attainment, and that in it and all it involves lies the solution of our educational problem.

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her so from her boy in these few short years?

Did her love prompt her really to study his growing intelligence with the thought of supplying the best surroundings for him? Did she not rather indulge in the feeling that she was to feed and clothe him, be pleased with and proud of his cunning baby ways until he was old enough to go to school, and then, somehow, that was to make a man of him?

Very likely she gratified his wishes when she could do so without too much trouble on her part, especially if he teased, and she could spare herself annoyance and trouble, at the time, by yielding.

She had evidently given much thought and care to his clothing, making the raiment for his body as beautiful as possible. She had eyes for that, but could she have seen the

subtle weaving of that web gathering closer and closer about the baby hopes, aspirations, and powers, binding and burying, day by day, the possibilities of his manhood, would she not have shrunk appalled at the spectacle? Especially as she, more than all the world besides, could save him. She was ready to spend money, time, and strength in his service, but did she live *with* him? The two rode but a short distance, and as they left the car left also an aching in my heart. I longed to clasp the mother in my arms, for she too had been the victim of misunderstanding, and show her, before it was too late, how she was missing the pure gold of life for herself and her little boy. But she had gone, and, as I turned my eyes from the window, where I had looked out to see them once more, I half felt that the thought in my heart, which seemed almost a

cry, would arrest the attention of the mother and arouse a new impulse in her heart. I looked up, and, as if in a new world, I saw a sweet-looking woman who had just entered with two little boys. The younger boy sat by his mother, and the elder came over and took the very seat by the open window just vacated by the little Johnnie, and repeated at once the operation of looking out to see all that was to be seen. He was not outdone by Johnnie in putting his head out as far as possible to see the engine, and, with great interest, I watched the mother's loving, anxious glances. Soon she came over and sat down by the boy and made some pleasant remark about the outlook, and then suggested that it might not be quite safe to put his head out so far, and the matter was talked over between the mother and child with as much candor

and interest as if the subject were as new to her as it was to him. He listened with the eagerness, always so charming, of a child who is getting a new thought. The mother went back to her seat, and the dear little fellow went on with such investigations as he could make without putting his head out of the window; and instead of feeling soured, or even interrupted by his mother's counsel, seemed impressed by her wisdom, and looked so sweetly for her to notice each new discovery, that it was a delight to watch him. She evidently lived *with* her children. And to give these two illustrations force, you have but to watch mothers and children in their daily intercourse. You will find these two extremes—sympathy with and entire lack of it—as well as all the shades between, and the result in every case will be justified by the amount of wholesome and

wise sympathy that has directed this intercourse from birth. But we must remember that we cannot correctly estimate conditions. When we have done our best, there is still a margin left for human incompleteness. Our best to-day leaves something to be won for to-morrow. Our judgments and discriminations change with each day's widening horizon. But to-morrow's gain depends upon the full and eager acceptance of to-day's problem and new light.

We could not point out every word, look, and tone that helped to make the result in either of the cases I have described any more than we could by analyzing a delicious peach, or a hard, sour one, find all the sunbeams and dewdrops, the favorable soil and wise care, or the absence of these, that made the one delicious and the other the opposite; but we know that the

conditions produced the results, and if we were cultivating peaches we should study these conditions. And if we did not get good results we should know that it was because we had not fulfilled the requirements of the fruit, and that failure or success would, in the end, correspond with the earnestness and intelligence with which we applied ourselves to our work. Unless we put ourselves in the way of learning all that is possible to be learned, we have no right to complain of want of success in any department. We know that unalterable law controls all things. Do we not regard this knowledge less in the management of our children than in any other department of life?

I do not forget the limitations of our human wisdom, even at its best, nor the exceptions when our furthest bound of skill is reached, and we stand helpless, with our life-sorrow in our

heart, before the mystery of that Providence that permits the tornado and the earthquake, the blight and the frost, which makes playthings of our best-wrought schemes. Accidents of birth and of life must be left with that larger vision which dwells only with eternal and infinite Law. But we set the limits to our comprehension of higher laws by trifling with those we partly apprehend, and by playing fast and loose with those we already know.

Last winter I went into a so-called kindergarten connected with a very select school in a prominent city. The children were fine-looking, and the lady in charge — I cannot call her a kindergartner — was evidently impressed, in a certain way, with the dignity of her position. One of the little boys, perhaps four years old, with great delicacy of organization

and busy brain, was constantly, and almost unconsciously, asking questions or making remarks about his sewing and such things as it suggested. He was indescribably interesting to me from his combination of delicacy and force; but the teacher thought he asked too many questions, so turned to him, and said, "Merton, you are very selfish to take so much of my time asking questions." He fairly quivered under the infliction. His face showed that his nature was a generous one, and he had a pretty correct if indistinct idea of the meaning of selfishness. She was inexcusable in making this accusation. His delight in the new life constantly opening before him made expression a necessary part of his development; and if she could not give intelligent and sympathetic attention to this expression, the child ought not to have been there.

Or, being there, if the eager questioning, which was to the child an open door to the universe, must be repressed for the good of the other children, there were endless resources to draw from, if she had been wise enough to see them and loving enough to make use of them, without saying what was cruel or untrue, and what she did say was both these.

The bruised little baby was completely silenced, and the satisfied air of the teacher seemed to say, "See what control I have over these children!"

Not long after she came to me to explain some point she thought I might not understand, when one little boy, very much interested in laying his rings, said,

"Oh, Mrs. A., I have made a balloon!"

She turned upon him a very severe

look, and said, "Lloyd, you are very impolite indeed, to interrupt me when I am talking."

She had given these rings to the children to play with, and was there for the express purpose of attending to them. No other ordinary claim could, with any justice, interfere with this first one; but if she deliberately took up some other interest, she still ought to have regarded the first claim enough to give the children the right to ask her attention, or else ask them to excuse her for the time she needed, just as she would have done to a grown person.

But suppose she had asked to be excused, and the little fellow really was impolite in interrupting her. He was a child, and had come there for the express purpose of being taught; he needed forming as well as informing, and how dared she undertake this

work if she had not first learned to be polite and respectful? She could have made it as pleasant as possible at the time, and then, later, taken or made an opportunity of showing the boy the better way. He would have remembered it just as well, and would not have been wounded. And instead of giving him an example of injustice and rudeness, she would have been to him, as she ought to have been, a worthy model. She was, whether she knew it or not, a pattern and guide to these children just when impressions are strongest, and what had she learned of living with them? If she had had any conception of their point of vision and outlook, could she have spoken so rudely to them, making it doubly severe by doing so before a stranger? Yet she was for many years a popular teacher, and, what is worse, her school was called a kindergarten.

Two emotions were aroused in these children, the excitation of which should always be avoided if possible, namely, self-consciousness and self-defence: the best growth can never be secured when either of these is active. Self-consciousness puts self between the child and the object to be attained, and self-defence draws upon and exhausts the force needed to attain the desired result; so that in both cases power is diverted from its legitimate channel, and used in direct opposition to harmonious growth.

If this is so, is it any wonder so few of us are well-rounded and beautiful types of manhood and womanhood? For the usual attitude towards children, both in the home and in the school, tends directly to stimulate both these qualities into abnormal growth.

Observe, when you have opportuni-

ty, how differently we treat children from the way we treat their elders. We notice details of their dress and movements that would be uncivil in the extreme to older persons. How difficult it is to find just the point at which a child's individuality begins! We say "Don't," and blame him for everything not to our liking, and also go on doing and judging everything for him "till he is old enough to judge for himself"; but somehow we waken too late to the fact that he is old enough, but unfortunately, and greatly to our disappointment, the average child does not seem to discriminate clearly and wisely. There is a want of correct thinking, and "didn't think" is the stereotyped excuse for all delinquencies, and the worst of it is, it is true.

Now all knowledge must be gained experimentally. Everything else is

belief. It may be truth, but somebody else has proved it to be so. You must take it second-hand, or experiment and find it out for yourself.

The first instinct of a child is self-preservation. For a time everything goes into his mouth; then he assumes a defensive attitude at the slightest appearance of danger; and almost simultaneously with this he begins to experiment with his new-found toes, then with his teeth; and later the room offers to his wondering eyes untold treasures to be investigated. If only he can be so fortunate as to get hold of one of these treasures! How should he know they are not all his own?

The typical man Adam felt no scruples whatever in appropriating all that he found, and each new baby finds himself in his Garden of Eden. Why should he not explore everything with-

in his reach? If it is a vase, or anything which will be harmed or will harm him, help him to handle it over and over again as long as it pleases him. Possibly he will resent assistance, especially if anything has been taken from him rudely, for, although he may not consciously remember, yet his little life forces have not failed to take in nourishment from such surroundings as you have furnished him. Do not for a moment deceive yourself with the idea that he is to begin his education by and by. When your child is a year old, he has made a strong hold upon life by putting the roots of his being deep into the mellow soil of wholesome letting alone, or he has taken on the quality and attitude of repression by your too much doing for him, which has the effect of "nagging," however loving these attentions may be. If it is possible to

let him alone to make his experiments and investigations, by all means let him do so, even at the risk of getting a slight fall or a bruise.

You do not pick open your rose-bud that you may revel a few days sooner in its delicate beauty and fragrance. You know that this would be fatal, and that you cannot improve upon nature's silent but certain movement within laws too subtile for our comprehension. Our eyes are not yet anointed to see that the opening of the human flower—the soul—is subject to the same beautiful and unerring law. It almost seems as if we meddle with the unfolding mind of the child just in proportion to our love for him, and so get a genus of weaknesses or faults peculiar to children who are victims of too much attention. And these faults will prove a more unpromising environment to be liberated from than

that of children who have had too little done for them, because in this case the faculties have simply lain dormant for the want of an awakening impulse ; while in the other, excessive and abnormal growth has been stimulated, thus prematurely exhausting the forces, or giving a distaste at the outset for further effort or accomplishment.

Try to let your child do the thing he wants to do, however absurd it may seem to you, and if he asks for help, give it to him in his own way. Do not presume to judge for him what he wants to do, simply because you see no sense in it. In pleading for this liberty I do not forget the necessity of teaching children, even in their babyhood, the difference between their own possessions and rights and those of others. To learn this difference is a fundamental need of charac-

ter, but there is no way of teaching this so forcibly as to respect their rights and possessions.

A little boy not yet three, though mature in some ways and very manly, came to a kindergarten which was kept in the anterooms of a hall. A row of settees was left on either side of this hall, and for several days this little fellow gave his earnest attention to experimenting with the settees. The earnestness of his manner showed that it was a real question with him, and to solve it as much a part of his education as anything that will ever come. Was it not as much a stepping-stone to something higher as will be his algebra or calculus by and by?

He was taking measurements—not by any of our tables of measure, it is true, but, what was better still, they were original, and also very real to him —and the same conscientious deference

was due to him in his efforts as would have been recognized and expected if he had been an older student in some important branch of science. This was important to him, and if, for the so-called good order of the kindergarten, he had been forced away from this delightful and legitimate occupation, neither the wisdom of the ages nor the wealth of the mines could have filled its place to him. Besides, it would have aroused in him both self-consciousness and self-defence, which have already been seen to be fatal to the best growth; and it was not disorder. Some of the children looked surprised, others laughed quietly, but it was explained to them that this little friend had never seen the settees till he came to the kindergarten, and that he was measuring them with his little arms and legs. The children seemed well satisfied with the expla-

nation, and apparently saw no reason why he should not work in his own way. They seemed to see, in their unconscious way, the dignity of real work in his efforts that a like number of fathers and mothers, had they been there, would have failed to see.

When Edwin had found out just what relation the seats bore to him, they were of no further use to him. and so were dropped like any other plaything he had mastered. It seems easy for some one to confound this wholesome letting alone with indifference. One is simply regarding the rights of children, or, in other words, living with them, and is the height of wisdom, and the other is inexcusable weakness.

Let us, then, live *with* our children, thus putting around them an atmosphere of joy, which is the "inflowing universe" to their awakening intelli-

gence, and produces the harmony of life and character that alone is the triumph of our higher civilization, and that makes certain the safe and happy solution of the questions lying in wait for us.

III

CHILDREN: THEIR MODELS AND THEIR CRITICS

THERE is no ignorance so ungenial or so hopeless as that which relates to every-day matters upon which we have been mistaken. When once we get a wrong impression of anything, its repetition deepens the groove of the mistake, and our familiarity with it is to us the guaranty of its truth.

We entertain, quite royally, too, sometimes, notions about education, about eating, about social life, which we find later to be very erroneous;

but we have clung to these notions as if they were vital principles.

Dear as our children are to us, there is no interest in life which shelters so many delusions as that relating to their development. Though their success in life is first in our hearts, and unerring law which secures or hinders this success lies around and beneath us, yet we have made no science of combining love and law that has given satisfactory results.

The phenomena which led to Galileo's discoveries and those of Newton and others had lain before the world since time began, but the world was no wiser for them till eyes were opened—evolved, so to speak—to see these phenomena in their true relations to life, and as phases of law and unity.

Because great men and noble women have lived in all ages, it is not

therefore certain that their education was the best, but that character asserted itself in spite of environment. The test of civilization is not in exceptional cases, but in the masses—in the state of society. And society is only the individual multiplied, and we may safely trust our social and all other problems when we have learned to make the most of the individual.

The Indian guide in the Canadian forest takes you in his canoe safely through shallow rapids where it seems every moment as if nothing can save you from being dashed upon the rocks. His safety and his peril lie neither in smooth water nor dangerous rapids, but in the amount of skill he possesses to manage his craft in the midst of either. He is safer in the fearful rapids than I should be in smooth water, for his eye and his hand are trained to accuracy. Every mus-

cle is taught to obey his will implicitly and instantly, and the nerves are steady because they trust the combined power of will and muscle. And he is the more secure because this power was an unconscious acquirement. It entered gradually into the fibre of his life before he was old enough to choose.

No life, even if it were better thus, could be so sheltered with love and protecting care that it would be safe with these alone. There must be, within the child, educated will and conscience to secure his safety in times of peril; and the greatest peril is often present when there is least outward appearance of it, and when only an unconscious habit of self-direction and control can save.

"As, still, to the star of its worship, though clouded,
The needle points faithfully o'er the dim sea."

But this fine, ingrained loyalty to the right can become a possession—the fibre of one's life—only by making the playtime of his plastic years a time of joyous liberty of right-doing. Anything learned later as a conventional creed is, like a garment, liable to be laid aside at the fancy or convenience of the wearer.

One devoted mother I knew asked a neighbor, whose little boy went to a kindergarten, what good it could possibly do him to go there and play for three hours each day? The neighbor answered that, for one thing, her little boy had learned that his play was not complete until he had picked up and put away his playthings when he had done using them. The mother replied, with an air of conscious virtue, that she loved her children well enough to pick up their playthings for them.

A man, whose little boy of four years was such a bundle of unorganized, not to say disorganized, material that he was nowhere welcome, objected to sending him to a kindergarten because he loved him too well to have the child away from him so long each day. Besides, he said, since he loved the boy better than anybody else did, he knew the child was better off with him than with anybody else. Other people saw that the boy never obeyed his father in anything; a fact which would be sufficient evidence to a reasonable person that the child needed something more in the way of organization than he was getting.

The condition of mind which these two instances indicate is a common one, and would make its own comment in deeper tones than we can imagine if there were some phonograph to register the impression made upon

any child by such an attitude towards him on the part of the parent, and reveal it to us later, when it, with all its accretions, had become character.

Besides failing to build up character through and by means of the daily occurrences of their years of play, we often deliberately, through misunderstanding child nature, put around our children just those conditions which will arouse rebellion in some natures, while others will have their wits sharpened to evade or escape punishment or disagreeable comments and criticisms; and still another class—those who most need encouragement, because the moral life-principle is naturally weak—will early succumb to this unfavorable atmosphere, and become effortless and characterless.

Thus early in life many children lose all power of discriminating between truth and its semblance; be-

tween simple honesty, which ought to be every child's birthright, and the policy which is principally concerned in making their own way advantageous or easy. And this is legitimate growth, for self-defence is one of the first elements of character as well as of life, and so a necessity; and as growth is one form of motion, it seeks the point of least resistance. When children rebel, it is often from an intuitive, though perhaps crude sense of justice, and when we meet it with direct opposition we only challenge self-defence instead of reason and judgment, and so the sense of justice is buried in the eager demand or struggle for a one-sided settlement of rights. That is, the average child demands rights for himself, but does not learn to balance the rights of others against his own. And what is more apparent everywhere in life than this confu-

sion of thought, even among men and women?

A beautiful boy of four years, whose parents were unusually wise in dealing with him, had a wheelbarrow given him which was just as large as he could manage, and it aroused in him a sense of power and dignity that was beautiful to see. He carried on a large business with his barrow; but the greatest of all his responsibilities was that of carrying letters to the post-office in his barrow, and bringing home whatever he found there.

He could not always confine his delight strictly to his new possession and dignity, for there was the world, to him, to be explored between his home and the office. One day his interest in other things had kept him longer than usual, and his mother went to see what was detaining him. She found him just at the office door,

with his freight of letters to bring home, and seeing one for herself, took it from the barrow and opened it. Little Edwin raised a vehement cry of protest, saying the letter was his to carry home in his wheelbarrow. The man told him to carry the letter right home. The mother saw and respected the child's sense of right, and put the letter back into the barrow; but the wound was too keen, and he continued to say, "Mamma, you ought not to have done it," over and over between his sobs. And he was right. He had been intrusted with letters to carry home, and in all probability he will never feel a more weighty responsibility or a greater sense of the importance of his work, and both had been levelled at a blow. His possession had been taken from him by sheer force, before which he was helpless. That his indignation was

not appeased by putting the letter back into his keeping showed that he was contending for a principle, and not for possession or any selfish interest. Many a serious quarrel and desperate struggle had less provocation than this, looking at the matter from the boy's standpoint.

The little fellow refused to be comforted, and so was taken home as best he could be, and laid tenderly and lovingly in bed. After sleeping away the sharpness of sorrow and disappointment and consequent exhaustion, the matter could be talked over; but while he was so tired, and keenly smarting under the sense of injustice done him, every word was fuel to the flame. Those who saw the transaction said, "Where does he get his violent temper? What a will he has!" They utterly failed to see that to understand the matter they

must get to his range of vision, and that his violent temper was the result of his unfledged integrity, and unspoiled, and, of course, unripe, appreciation of his rights and duties.

He could by no possibility look at the case from his mother's standpoint any more than he could see things which could be seen only at the level of her eyes. From his plane he was absolutely loyal to his trust.

At first glance it seems a trivial distinction between taking the letter that was her own, and receiving it from Edwin's hand, when he felt that his duty in regard to it was done, and he was ready to lay aside his responsibility; but looking at it as he saw it, there was the whole distance, an endless one, between right and wrong.

Several neighbors saw the rebellious child either at the office or on the way home, and, so far as I saw and heard,

all wanted a chance to "make that boy behave better," in the honest belief that the mother's treatment of the case came from weakness; that her patience was a lack of proper discipline, and was spoiling the child. But their honest belief was a snare to them; for it seemed to me then, and I think now, that their convictions were established and their criticisms meted out through their annoyance at the child's screaming, rather than from any settled theories in regard to his development, or their intelligent sympathy with his sorrow.

This boy, now almost a man, is a model of manly activity, and his loyalty in his sports, in his studies, and in all the trusts reposed in him is a marked feature in his character. He is the admiration of all who know him, and a tower of strength to his now widowed mother.

I do not believe he could have been all this without the help of his mother's spirit of fairness, and sympathy with his baby-sense of justice as well as his more mature sense, for a little antagonism in his earliest years could easily have turned his power into channels of obstinacy and self-will.

We are often meeting just such experiences with children in the school and kindergarten as well as in the home, and are apt to think, as Edwin's critics did, that the children are very wilful and obstinate. And this is often true at the school age, but it can easily be traced back to the opposition and interference that controlled the still earlier years. Oh, could we see clearly through our personal discomforts and inconveniences to the actual needs and rights of children, we should say with Joubert, that "children have more need of models than of critics."

IV

"NAUGHTY" AND "DON'T"

A LITTLE boy five years old came to the kindergarten one morning after a night of rain, which had left water and half-melted snow upon the frozen ground, so that it was difficult to get about without rubber boots. He had, as his mother had told me, as if it were exceptional, a great passion for playing in the mud and water. She had forbidden it, and punished him for it, but he would do it all the same.

On this morning his little rubbers were of small account, and his feet very

wet. One of the assistants, who had been a teacher many years, and was supposed to know a good deal about children, helped him to take off his wraps, and, coming to his rubbers, began to pity him for having such wet feet. With the greatest kindness she said,

"Oh, it is too bad, isn't it, Harley? You didn't mean to wet your feet so, did you?"

Harley grew restless and impatient, and tried to draw his feet away from her, muttering, between his teeth, "I did want to wet my feet."

With the kindest possible intention, she continued to pity him. "Oh, no, Harley, you didn't want to wet them so; I know you didn't. It is too bad, isn't it?"

This was too much. He twisted his little feet in all directions to prevent her unbuttoning his shoes, she all the

time trying to conciliate him by pitying him. At last, finding that he could not convince her that he did want his feet wet, he resorted to the only means of defence left him—his hands—and dealt her a heavy blow in her face. Still her patience did its perfect work, which seemed to be to ignore all wisdom and discretion, to say nothing of truth, in dealing with him. The boy's anger was thoroughly aroused; his teeth were set; and being a stout little fellow, he made it impossible for Miss —— to get his shoes off, so she gave up in despair, and left him to the care of another. She said she had been perfectly kind and patient with Harley, but he seemed like a wild animal in his anger. What could be the matter with him? She was certainly innocent of any but the most loving care for him, but she was miles away from seeing the matter from his standpoint.

He loved to play in the water. He had been scolded and punished for this, and as soon as his attention was called specially to his wet feet he remembered these punishments, and became very uncomfortable, and every word expressing the well-meant but mistaken pity increased the discomfort, till he was its helpless victim, no longer responsible for anything he said or did. His inheritance was not one to help him to be early, if ever, reasonable, and he was at an age when the reasoning faculties are uncertain at best, and innocence is not built up into virtue.

He had a vague idea that his mother ought to be obeyed, without knowing any reason for obedience. She had not made her wishes a golden chain to lead him, neither had she taught him to respect her authority by requiring obedience only when his

good demanded it, and when she knew she could secure it. Besides, a child's memory for things he is not interested in is very short, and his desire to make relations with everything that pleases him is very strong. His mother had forbidden his doing that which was a strong temptation, and he was out of her sight. She demanded of the child often that which he could not under the circumstances be expected to do, so his tendency to obey had grown less with his years. The little fellow found this opportunity a rich one, and he was all alone, so it was most natural that he should wade in the water to his heart's content. But when the pleasure was over, and his mistake was spread so lavishly before him by the pity of Miss ——, he was made very wretched. The first thing a child does under such circumstances is to resist. It makes little difference

how, but self-defence must be maintained. It is instinctive even with a baby, and will be expressed with more or less vehemence according to the nature of the child. The words of pity meant censure to him, and the sugar-coating was, and always is to children if they are worth anything, more exasperating than honest rebuke. Children take kindly to downright honesty, as flowers to fresh air, and we cheapen our character before them and weaken our influence over them when we offer them any dilution or makeshift in place of it. Harley declared that he did want to wet his feet; not because he really wanted them wet, but because he wanted to do the thing that made them wet, and the inconvenience of having them so bore no comparison to the pleasure of the frolic in the snow. Of course he did not count the wet feet when he

began the fun, for forethought is a later growth; it is doubtful if he thought about them at all till his attention was called to them. So true is it that children have such a natural affinity with everything that brings joy, that a good deal of ungenial treatment and discomfort will be shed from their hearts and forgotten, as flowers draw from the sunlight beauty and fragrance in spite of unfavorable influences.

The sequel to the story is too interesting to be omitted, and completes the force of the illustration.

As I went to Harley when called, I could see, through my imagination, his pleasure in putting his feet deep in the yielding snow, taking each foot up so quickly that he could, if possible, see the deep well it had made before the water filled it; the levelling of little mountains of snow, seeing them fall

before the tread of his two feet, which were giants from the near mountain. I felt a hearty sympathy with the genuine delight I knew he had experienced, and said,

"Well, Harley, you found a whole riverful of water this morning, didn't you? Could you have sailed a little boat in it if you had had one?"

This was a new avenue for his thought, though running with the same current as his own, instead of against it. It opened the right door, and he lived over again his pleasure instead of his punishment, and was pleased to confide to me some of the little incidents of getting from his home to the kindergarten, encouraged by as few words as would serve to show my interest.

I had seated him on my lap and taken off his shoes and stockings during the conversation, with no resist-

ance from him, and when I wiped his feet and rubbed them with my warm hands, he received the service with evident pleasure. When I had to go to other duties, I said,

Now, Harley, I have wrung the water from your stockings, but that does not make them dry, you know, so here they are on the register; and will you watch and see when they are quite dry? I will come again soon. And here is a warm wrap to cover two little feet that waded to the kindergarten through a river of water. Did you remember to sing 'Rippling, purling little river' when you were wading through it?"

His face broke into a smile as I left him, his chair placed where he could see me through the dressing-room door, and he remained contented till his stockings were dry. Miss ——, in the kindness of her heart, tried sev-

eral times during the morning to show him some attention, but each time received only a sullen rebuff.

At noon I helped him with his wraps, and led him to the door, and as I looked out, said,

"Still the same river to go home in, Harley, and I suppose so small a boy as you could hardly get home without wetting his feet; so if you wet them, you must tell your mother that if she will excuse your wet feet this time, you will soon be old enough to find the safe places to walk in, and so keep them dry."

He straightened himself up, and said, "I'm five years old."

"Yes," I said; "and you have sharp eyes and brave little feet for a boy five years old; but when you are six, your eyes will be still sharper, and you might be able to find the safe places for your feet, so as not to wet them."

He gave me a "good-by kiss, and as he turned, said, "I'm a pretty big boy."

The next morning the travelling was fully as bad as on the day before. I saw Harley coming through to the dressing-room with his rubbers in his hand. He hurried in, and, with a very proud look, said, "See ! I didn't wet my feet; my eyes were sharper." And, true enough, his shoes were dry. He had taken his rubbers off in the vestibule to assure himself before seeing me that he had succeeded in keeping his shoes dry. Now this was a genuine triumph, and could have been accomplished only by earnest effort worthy of an older boy. He had waded in the water for the fun he got out of it, and probably would have continued to wade but for the new thought of its being a little smarter to keep out of the water, and for the pleasure

of surprising and pleasing me. No amount of punishment would have corrected the habit.

Nothing is more important in dealing with children than to handle our discriminations between correct and incorrect behavior with decision, sympathy, and discretion, as a skilful surgeon handles his knife. And like his work, too, any reckless or thoughtless use of power—lack of discretion, indiscriminate sympathy, or decision without intelligence — produces discomfort and pain, which is strength lost to the patient, and we never know how potent the lost strength might have been for good.

There are two words I would, if I could, banish from the nursery. These words are "naughty" and "don't." If they were nothing worse, they are indefinite, and so unworthy. But they are worse, and their effect is destruc-

tive rather than constructive, and there is, in general, the quality of the wet blanket in both words that has no redeeming thing in it.

I think we all know that there is but one fatal thing in our life, and that is discouragement; and we can also see, if we think seriously about it, that the number of "don'ts" the average child receives daily would discourage a grown person, and cannot be other than serious to the child; for while growth is all-powerful—"a seedling's heaving heart will move a stone"—the least pressure will change the direction and consequently the form of growth. An imperceptible prick on a tender leaf in spring will show prominently as a scar or blemish in the mature leaf. So it is better to use the affirmative or constructive form more with children, and the negative form less.

"Naughty" belongs to the same family with "don't," and has the additional objection that it is so often untrue. A child's failure to do that which suits our taste or convenience, or his first crude attempts to do that which he sees older people do, are generally called "naughty." Even a baby who refuses to give a kiss to admiring friends who ask it, though these are strangers to him, is often called naughty, though the refusal really comes from pure native self-respect.

Neither of these words offers any thing constructive or even suggestive to the imagination, and so they do not lead to anything good; but, on the contrary, their effect on the child is depressing or antagonistic, according to his disposition.

Mothers often ask, "How are we to know just how to deal with our children?" There is but one answer

to this question. We cannot *know*. There is very little in this world that we can *know*. But if there is one interest above all others that it is our duty and ought to be our pleasure to study with heart and brain, and come as near knowing as possible, it is our children. And we ought to study them—their needs and rights—by first putting ourselves in their place. This must be the first step towards the real understanding of childhood. We already spend time enough and money enough upon their education, food, and clothing, but there is a still further evolution of spiritual insight for us to reach before we shall apply our hearts unto wisdom in such a manner as to prevent not only many of the bodily ills, but the errors of thought, emotion, and will.

When I read of Samuel of old that his mother made for him a little coat,

I wonder if, far back so many ages ago, the mother had made any definite provision for the soul of her boy, as she had for his body. Surely the tiniest thought-seed planted so long ago in the mother-heart of the world ought to have led us ere this to see that, whether we know it or not, we do weave garments for our children's spirits, before they are responsible, by our attitude towards them and towards life. And these garments may be radiant to the eye of the soul, or seamed, shapeless, and unattractive.

"On the great water-shed of the continent there is many a rock upon which two drops of a shower falling near together, one a little to the east and one to the west, have grown wider and wider apart, till, after many days, one was in the Atlantic and one in the Pacific, a whole continent apart."

So wide apart does mature life find

the once innocent babies from homes apparently equal in opportunity. But there has been a difference in their training and environment, or a want of harmony between these and the separate needs, which has subjected them to an unequal struggle, with this varying result. And we dare not call it the providence of God or the depravity of man till we have searched our own hearts, and learned whether our daily life before and with our children is such as to add to the stream of holy or of unholy living.

V

SPIRIT AND METHOD OF EARLY EDUCATION

YLVESTER JUDD says, speaking of the new-born infant, "A naked soul comes to your hand, O mother! as well as a naked body. You have prepared garments for the latter, shall the former go unendowed?"

There is a difference, which is vital to society as well as to the individual, between the results of neglecting to prepare for the body and for the spirit. The body, left to cold, hunger, and neglect, dies, and is at rest;

but the soul may be starved by inheritance, and robbed of everything that can feed and clothe it by its unfavorable surroundings, and yet live on, if such an existence can be called life.

The garments for the body are soon outgrown, worn out, and destroyed, and no trace is left; their loss can be made up. Not so easily does the soul lay aside the garments with which we have, consciously or unconsciously, covered it. We are, more truly than we are aware, the makers and guardians of the soul's wardrobe. And what does education do towards recognizing or fitting us for the discharge of this important trust?

All through the unconscious years of early life the garment is weaving around every child, the grace and fitness of which shall beautify and protect, or the want of these dwarf and disfigure, the wearer while life lasts.

What problem, then, compares with that of education

It is also evident that education must begin with life, and our first inquiry is if there are laws controlling the growth of heart and brain which are inexorable and necessary to be understood before we can be successful in guiding and harmonizing feeling and intelligence into the nobler manhood and womanhood that we are all longing to see.

The gardener studies nature's elements and provides soil, light, air, and moisture for his plants in proper proportion and season; and the cattle-breeder follows known laws in the rearing and training of his animals.

No one can doubt that there are laws of development for the human being which should never be set aside or trifled with, and ought to govern all our intercourse with children.

There must be something coming before and preparing the way for instruction. Not that a child can develop without taking in a great deal of knowledge. The amount taken in during the first seven years is beyond calculation, and, because of this, he should be guarded from overdoing. The brain may be overloaded at this age as well as the stomach and the muscles. These first years are eminently the time for observation and natural activity, and for that reason are too precious to be used for taking in arbitrary facts that do not relate to the child's life at the time, and will come easily after the faculties are strengthened to grasp them.

If you were to go into a strange country to do some special work for and with the people, you would first learn their language—not from books, but from the people. You would

learn their idioms and their vernacular; also their habits, customs, and ways of life. You would make these observations the more critically and earnestly if your errand were one of deep interest to you. If your success in life depended upon it, you would feel even the minutes precious to learn every peculiarity of habit, every subtlety of expression. The people and your relations with them would be all-engrossing, so that you might lose no foothold in the path of success.

Every child ought to come into the world with a mission of some sort, and needs to be equipped for this mission not by teaching what others have learned as of the first importance, but by teaching him what he is of himself capable of doing, and how he is to take part in the world of people and things in which he finds himself.

From the dawn of intelligence in

the baby, we try to instruct him—to have him learn something; and this mistake often throws a cloud over his development that hinders progress all through life. Facts not needed by the baby are weights, and take precious time, strength, and room. Later, when the faculties are developed, we may give technical instruction in any department of science or art, and it may, and probably will, be a means of education in the broadest sense. But we ought not to aim to make, primarily, artists, chemists, astronomers, but to make noble men and women, self-poised and self-respecting; and later, artists, scientists, mechanics, and everything else according to the taste and capacity of the individual.

School life is begun with instruction as an end. At this age the faculties are undeveloped, and the pro-

cess of putting on from without interferes with the natural growth from within, and, as a result, our boys and girls are not self-poised and vigorous in physical, intellectual, or moral attainment. What we need as a basis for all attainment is well-formed understanding; and we shall agree with Montaigne that "our understandings are no more formed by learning by rote what men have said than we can learn to use an axe by discourse."

The work of early training in the home and in the school is too exclusively a tax upon the memory, and this early memorizing is open to two objections. The former has been already indicated; it occupies the precious seed-time when the perceptive faculties ought to be striking their roots deep into life, as roots into the soil, so that a vigorous and well-sustained growth may result. It is now

that the roots are finding their room or limit which must determine the harvest. And what do we give them? Notwithstanding our improved methods, we still give them so many pages of words somebody else has written, so many words they do not understand, to learn to spell, and so many sums in arithmetic. A certain amount must be memorized arbitrarily. And often the child who can recite the lesson the most correctly has the least ability to put to practical use what he has learned. But his high marks satisfy him and his parents; and the child who is unable to memorize easily what has no meaning to him is discouraged at what his teachers and friends call his dulness. Or if, now and then, an advanced teacher adopts the wiser methods of developing by giving instruction through such things as the child is meeting in his daily

experience, the parents are disturbed because the teacher "does not use a book half the time in her lessons," and reads from something else besides the reading-book.

Our school-books are full of useless puzzles to the little questioners, which tax the nerves and confuse the mind. A bright little girl came home from school one afternoon in a drooping condition. After supper she confided to her mamma that she was afraid she had missed in the examination that day. She was sure all but one of the answers were right. "A boy sold three fourths of his stock of apples, and had two left; how many had he to start with?" She could not see how the answer could be any other than eight; but then no boy would think of going out with only eight apples to sell, and that could not be right. And then the tears and sobs

came, telling how serious the question and failure in answering it had been to her. Now if the boy had given away the apples instead of selling them, all this waste of brain and nerve would have been saved to her.

The second objection to the system which puts memorizing in the place of development is that memory to be of the best quality must be the outgrowth of clear, correct impressions, and correct impressions are possible only when the perceptive faculties have been cultivated by orderly use before school work begins, at the age when they have the natural right to lead.

Memory, then, when stimulated at this stage of growth, is premature, and is, with the understanding, less vigorous and trustworthy in later years, because it has been excited too

early and unduly, and because it is not based upon its legitimate foundation—educated perceptions.

At this age, too, the moral as well as the reflective faculties are waiting to receive evidences in relation to facts and things. How shall they get these evidences? Through knowledge, or belief? We have seen that all knowledge must be reached through experience. Everything else is belief. Now we could not afford to leave belief out of our life, because it unifies the race by permitting each to contribute to the welfare of all, and it is the half-way house towards faith—that golden fruit of our later years. But both these are strong and high in proportion as they are based upon correct knowledge of things which are fundamental. In other words, if the understanding is well formed, belief will not be satisfied with super-

stition and false estimates, nor faith rest in anything but the highest.

Let us see to it, therefore, that our children do not spend these precious early years in memorizing what even the wisest have said, when the universe with her precious wealth of resources lies at their feet at every step. Thus will they be dignified through such original research and personal responsibility as are at their level, and we shall build for them better than we know.

We are so entangled with systems and theories that we have grown up with, that it is not easy to mark out a path wide enough to walk in; but this is not necessary, since we are all so loyal to truth, let us hope, that, being convinced we are wrong, and sure of even one step in the right direction, we take that one step in the faith that is creative, and the full promise of fruition.

In dealing with children, a great deal lies in knowing what not to do. We have seen that we are not to instruct before we develop, and that we do not require belief when knowledge is possible. We have also seen that in our methods for development a great deal of instruction is unconsciously included; but we may have abundant instruction with very little or no development. The memory is taxed to the exclusion of the æsthetic nature, mechanical skill, and what, in forcible language, we call common-sense. Neither are moral insight and integrity of character included in this worship of the memory or intellect. But, again, how shall we make our thought live in our work? And again we answer, first be convinced that there are laws that control the growth of the understanding and affections, and that when we work in obedience to these

laws all creation works with us, and success is therefore inevitable; but when we work in opposition to them, we work single-handed and alone against fearful odds. "We only work to advantage when we work in unison with the laws of the universe." Then let our belief rise into the atmosphere of faith that what we believe in can be done, and the victory is ours.

Emerson says, "Great thoughts attract great events," making thought the great power in life; and Lowell completes the story by saying, "'Tis only God can be had for the asking" —the highest and best, the easiest of all things on earth to reach, if we only know it.

Wiser methods must be the result of a correct understanding of child nature. We must learn that work and thought must reproduce each other if we would follow nature's way, and

that this process must begin in the nursery with the dawning intelligence. In this way shall we build our foundation for that state of society which will give us fewer paupers and criminals, and fewer wasted lives in the higher walks of life. The most important things in this science of childhood we can all be learning daily, if we will, and the teachers shall be the children themselves, the only condition being that in judging and studying them we shall see from their level, and appreciate their mental and moral horizon.

If we would do this, we should be surprised at the outlook, and probably reconstruct our ideas of children's faults, and the measure of our surprise would be largely in favor of the children.

A sweet little girl, thoughtful beyond her years, said to her mother,

"Mamma, you got" to do something which had previously been talked of as necessary to be done. The mother very gently reproved the child; but when the "got" was repeated with emphasis, the reproof was strengthened by the expression of sorrow that her little girl should speak so peremptorily to her mother. And it was a day or two before she found out that the child meant "forgot," and was simply reminding her mother of what she had said ought to be and had not been done. The child knew the meaning of forgot, but had, in her vocabulary, retained only the last syllable. Here were hours of wonder and questioning to the baby under the imputation of being rude to her mother, and it was all the more a weight on the little brain and heart because she could not understand or express her dilemma.

A little boy who had never heard at home anything but the purest language, and had played but little with other children, and whose mother meant, above all things, to be a model to her children, told his mother one day that the God damn cows were in the yard, referring to some cows that were pastured near, and had broken loose. She was surprised, but his serious look arrested any reproof for the moment; but the boy, becoming anxious about the cows, repeated the sentence, and she told him it wasn't pleasant to hear that. He in turn was surprised, and asked why. She answered that they were not nice words to say, and reminded him that he had never heard her or his father use such words. He looked greatly puzzled, and said, "But, mamma, isn't Damn God's last name?" He had heard these words somehow, and, as he knew

nothing of profanity, took them literally. Having been brought up to have great reverence for God, and taught that He made everything, and not being familiar with the human ownership of the cows, he knew they belonged, as everything else did, to God, and, thanks to his careful training, would not show such disrespect to God as to leave off His last name.

One very indulgent father gave his little boy the only whipping he had ever had from him because he said, "You are a block head, father." The boy had that day learned how to make a man out of blocks, and, being full of interest in this new acquisition to his knowledge, he was comparing real heads with the one he had made from blocks. The father had a peculiarly square forehead, and the innocent boy saw with delight that his block man was not so absurd, after all.

These are samples of the entanglements that surround our children daily through our misapprehension of their point of vision.

Children who are sensitive brood over this misapprehension and injustice, and are made morbid by it, possibly sulky and stubborn, and the more robust natures rebel inwardly, till a defiant and belligerent attitude becomes a habit, and this means character, thus transforming the most valuable elements of manhood and womanhood into qualities unfortunate for the possessor and unlovely for the world. Besides, they occupy the ground to the exclusion of the better and the higher growth.

A little boy of fine quality for character had a baby sister come into the home, and was immediately told by the father that now his nose was broken, that he couldn't sit in mam-

ma's lap any more, and other things of the same nature. So the baby was not a welcome guest to the boy, and he showed his honest resentment on all these occasions. This soon became a source of amusement to the household, and the baby was often spoken of before visitors in order to bring out these spirited dramas in the child. I need not say that in addition to creating a belligerent spirit out of good, honest material, thus giving a wrong direction to his power at the outset of life, the brotherly love and pride that would otherwise have been born in his heart with the birth of the baby sister, enriching beyond words to tell, for love is a protecting halo, were smothered by this teasing. And for the sole reason that the parents and friends imagined they were getting fun out of it. Possibly this is an extreme case, but there is a great deal of this

kind of teasing done to children. And when grown people will do this for fun, is it any wonder that small boys will pull their sisters' dolls to pieces and tantalize them in various ways, and call it fun? Or that they torture animals to see them writhe and squirm, under the impression that they are getting fun out of the proceeding?

There are few children at ten years old who are not burdened with an excess of self-consciousness or an attitude of self-defence, or both—the result of our taking for granted that they must be constantly pruned and bent to our notions of school and society requirements. We forget that in sacrificing individuality we lose that force and beauty that belong to an original pattern, and put in its place one without special grace, and liable to weaken with advancing years,

and give to society mediocrity and uniformity instead of strength and unity.

We can easily believe, if we study children, that when their activities do not run in line with our wishes, it is not, primarily, from love of mischief, but that they are following the impulse to grow from within by doing and seeing the result. And with an earnestness that promises well for the future if turned in the right direction, they simply do with their might what their hands find to do ; and they need direction and help, not criticism or blame. Children enjoy our interest and sympathy in their play, and are enriched by our just commendation, and I am sure we should commend more freely and censure far less than we do if our eyes were opened to see children as they really are.

The normal training of teachers ought to include, first of all, the study

of development in its threefold aspect, and how to give children concrete things to make relations with and get results from. Teachers should also learn that the power to think clearly and understand is more valuable than any acquirement from books, and that books, as a rule, should be given only in obedience to a conscious want—to describe by picture and story what has already been presented to the child in the alphabet of things, and awakened an interest. This will make learning a delight to the child.

Instruction to be of highest value must bear the same relation to the mental faculties that food bears to the body. If wholesome food is given to gratify a healthy appetite, it will be digested and properly assimilated and produce good blood, but forced upon the stomach without this appetite, even the best food will not assimilate,

and given for any length of time in this way will produce disorder.

Children love knowledge naturally, as they love to eat. Who can doubt this who has seen a child investigating a trunk or a closet, a drawer or a box, for something new? The mental faculties require their nourishment as surely as the body needs food, and when there is no appetite for knowledge something is wrong, and it is the part of wisdom to inquire if the supply we have furnished has not been injudicious in quantity or quality, or been given at the wrong time.

We are justly proud of our public school, and mean that it shall lead our civilization; but we also feel that there is a fearful lack, even in the best society, of a more cultivated understanding and a greater integrity, not to speak of the helplessness, inefficiency, and crime that stalk or creep

about through every strata of civilization. And we feel that this age, with all its wisdom and its far-reaching influences, lacks yet a deeper knowledge and a greater love to search out and apply an education that shall enter into the fibre of our lives for healing and renewing, not, as now, to be put on as a garment.

Feeling the great need of larger results, we have increased the range of studies in the high schools, sparing no expense or trouble to make them models in every respect, and yet the results are no more satisfactory. We still have the same proportion of third and fourth rate workmen in every department of brain or hand labor. Irresponsibility and lack of enthusiasm for doing the best work seem to hang about us like a weight. Some leading educators are still looking to the high school for the remedy, and even ad-

vise that the university be included in our public-school system; but we may be sure the weak spot is in the foundation of the structure.

The increasing tendency to elective studies in the college, the schools of technology, and the efforts towards industrial education and manual training, all indicate that our thought is turning in the right direction as to methods; but what should we think of a class of men calling themselves farmers, knowing the best methods for work and understanding chemical affinities of soil and dressing, and yet who would see April and May go by, and gravely sow and plant in July and August? But this is just what we are doing in the educational field. The majority of parents and educators seem indifferent to the fact that more of good or of evil is sown before the seventh year than all the after-life, with

its opportunities and temptations, can uproot.

Let us double our money and attention for the beginnings of education, giving that direction at the start to habits of thought, feeling, and action, that shall put the children in possession of their best selves, and the great number who never reach the high school will have the vital part of preparation for an honest, active life, and the high school give us no more trouble than would the branches of a tree whose roots are furnished with all the conditions for the best growth.

Spirit and method of primary education — what shall they be? The methods must evidently be rooted in the spirit, and cannot be definitely given at this point of progress. In a general way, however, we are certain that at the beginning of education book instruction, as an end and

in the way it is now given, is not development, and so not what we want; that the means used must be such as to enlist the hearty interest of the child to be of the most value. That to secure this interest, the means, whatever they are, must be at his level. They must make him a partner, not a receiver only; and the evidence that our work is good shall be, not that he can answer all the questions in his text-books, but that he observes quickly and correctly, is able to compare accurately in the concrete, and also ready to use his faculties in adjusting such questions in morals as he can understand.

But it is specially with the spirit we must deal at this stage of our inquiry. First of all things, if we desire to be educators in any worthy sense, we must bring to the work a "heart that watches and receives." No one is fit to lead

others who is not himself in a state of obedience. So we will be loyal to nature's laws. Let us get the child heart into us that we may "bring him up with us into the thoughts and feelings of a man."

This spirit of receptivity in the teacher will create an atmosphere of delight which is to the process of education what warmth is to the growing plant. "Joyousness opens the mind of the child to the inflowing universe." These early joys of life are not mere fiction or ornament, but actual growths that bear abundant fruit.

Let us, then, through our work with the little children, build and move the future, and patiently and bravely help to advance the good of our age and undermine the evil.

VI

DISCIPLINE

THE primary object of discipline is to lead the child to self-control; which is entire and willing obedience to eternal law. And this self-control constitutes character.

The parent's will at first stands for this law, and should be as inflexible.

This statement is misleading if applied to the belief that parental authority involves the right to control all the child's doings, and that any self-assertion on his part is disobedience. Looked at from the highest standpoint, we have no more right to

interfere with individual choice in our children than we have to interfere with the choice of friends. Of course there is the law of self-defence, and also the greatest good to the greatest number, to be considered and disposed of in the family as in the state. Methods of application will necessarily vary according to the interpretation of ethics—which lies all the way from Tolstoï's complete individualism to the opposite theory. But the first principle is to make a just discrimination in accordance with our reason and conscience, for our children as for society, or authority becomes cruelty.

The great secret of discipline lies in so directing the choice of the child, through its playful activities and by example, from its birth, that it runs in natural channels and in harmony with its own good and the welfare of the family and companions. "It is the

office of education to put the first check upon some impulses to the advantage of others, to oppose thought to thought, tendency to tendency. To exact from children only what is necessary, but exact it firmly, is to prepare them to govern themselves. I do not hesitate to measure the value of an education according to the degree in which it has sought to teach the child from the cradle to help himself and govern himself—to make men who shall be characters." *

In a discussion on insanity by specialists, it was stated that one out of every five adults is unbalanced enough to make an insane act possible if an exciting cause in the direction of this unbalance and opportunity come together. This is partly recognized in the law restricting the use of fire-arms.

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* Henri Marion.

Many a murderer or defaulter would have gone through life without committing a criminal act if opportunity in the shape of some deadly weapon, the cover of darkness, or unrestricted handling of large sums of money had not assisted him in the moment of overwhelming temptation ; and many a man might have been behind the bars of public opinion or prison if circumstance had not been kinder than his education. We are apt to think we know ourselves when we are only untried.

When we think at all, we deplore this want of character, and are very apt to say that the qualities which permit these crimes are inherited. We lay too much stress upon inheritance and too little upon the influences of early life. It is a hopeful sign of growth that experts are believing less and less in heredity and more in cultivation.

Tendencies are inherited, but not often hopeless disease or mental unbalance. "When no strong innate proclivities exist, still more when training is specially adapted to foster such as do exist, then a mind may be moulded to almost any pattern of thought and feeling that is desired, provided that exclusive training be begun early enough, and be steadily enforced long enough. A mind may be moulded into madness by nurture and circumstances as well as distracted into it by disease."*

What is character but the crystallization of certain modes of thought, feeling, and expression, whose small beginnings were laid far back in the environment of the child before responsibility or even consciousness began—the sum of things which crept

* Maudsley.

into the early years, and have gradually made the fibre of being? Then what is the duty we owe to our children and to society if not to utilize these early years in forming such habits as will stand the test of life—its cares and its responsibilities? Take the appetite, for example, which, perverted, prostrates all that is divine in man, and let us see if we cannot find it reasonable that we often sow the seed of intemperance, and are not wise enough to see in the small beginnings that which is, in the end, desolation and despair.

The first thing a baby can do is to eat, and this is his principal accomplishment for some months, since nature can only complete the threefold unity of life by securing, first of all, the physical growth. We half blindly grasp this fact, and the baby is fed without law or reason. Any discom-

fort the child expresses is apt to be met with more food, because that often stops the crying, even though increasing the cause of the unrest. This demand that the stomach shall do duty for all the organs of sensation disorders the little being at once, so that few children are many weeks—perhaps days—old before a morbid condition of the stomach is produced. This condition creates craving all the time for something, and is met by more food, and herb teas, soothing syrups, and various nostrums, all of which are an increasing burden to the long-suffering digestive organs. The wonder is not that so many children die in infancy, but that so many live through it. But the foundation is laid not only for early death, but for a multitude of ills that belong to indigestion. These physical ills, hard as they seem, are the milder penalty for

living to eat at the outset of life. The severer, yet equally unrecognized, one is the unconquerable appetite, whose grasp drags reason from her throne, and silences the directing will.

Wholesome food given indiscriminately is in itself a form of intemperance, and the habit does not stop here. The moral element must control all our doing, if the doing is to be a success. In infancy this element must, of course, come from another, to be transferred, at first unconsciously, to the child ; but, since he is to be a responsible being, it is fatal to leave it out.

As I said before, eating is about all the child knows how to do the first year ; but, as his education really begins with his life, the act of eating should not be a purely animal proceeding ; if it is, undue prominence will be given to it, and it will assert a

place which does not belong to it, and which no after-wisdom will be likely to correct. During the nursing period the infant studies the mother's face, and drinks into its little being, through that precious, unspoken language which would exist between mother and child if there were no vocal organs or vocabulary, the love which vivifies and vitalizes the germs of being, as the spring sunshine awakens to life the sleeping buds.

These tender spontaneous attentions of the mother directly assist digestion as well as awaken "the soul that slumbers"; and mothers who are unfortunately deprived of this most desirable office of nursing their infants will be repaid beyond measure for holding and caressing the child while it is nursing the bottle, by its increased health and happiness, and by cementing the bond of unity between them

through this intangible but all-powerful communion.

Later there is an endless variety of ways by which social and æsthetic pleasure can be united to that of eating. A flower to share the attention of the child, or some pet toy which has become companion through his imagination, can be given till he is old enough to come to the family table, which should always offer a feast of sociability and kindly attentions. Let the child's imagination be so directed that his eating as well as his play shall be a fit preparation for mature life, and he will eat to *live*, and will not be robbed of his reason and his will through his appetite.

The digestive organs are, as we have seen, often unnatural, and at the school age the appetite is a constant temptation, more through the morbid craving than by hunger, and the fruit, nuts, and confectionery, the lemonade and

soda, lie in wait everywhere. There is no harm in any of these if taken as part of the necessary food for the body; but there is harm already begun when the appetite craves something continually, however harmless in itself. Nothing stands still, and the digestive organs become broken down, and leave an open door to an army of maladies that follow defective digestion and assimilation, or demand increasing stimulants; at first, perhaps, beer and tobacco, and so on to the end of the chapter. The history is repeated endlessly before our eyes, and must continue thus until we learn that temperance means "moderate use of things useful, and total abstinence from things hurtful." And this must be begun at birth by guiding and disciplining the appetite until it is well in the possession of reason and conscience before the hardened fibres

of maturity make reformation well-nigh impossible, even when judgment dictates a change.

There is a definite cause for the wide-spread demand for stimulants, a reason why alcoholic drink costs us yearly nine hundred millions of dollars, while bread costs about half as much; and philanthropists in this field, with a host of others, must continue with each successive generation the hopeless, almost heart-breaking, task of trying to help those who will not or cannot help themselves, until we can understand more of the wise planting and nurture of that only in whose ripening and ripened fruit we can rejoice.

George Henry Lewes, in his "Physiology of Common Life," and some others, claim that as the desire for stimulants is universal, it is evidently a natural demand.

This reasoning is, I think, unsound, unless it can be proved that the demand for stimulants antedates the mistakes and errors of civilization, and is more universal than these, which can hardly be done.

Civilization means taking possession of the forces of nature to serve our pleasure and profit, and is, at first, more concerned in possessing all that is possible than in the careful discrimination of how these forces can serve us best. The work of reconsideration comes later. Another generation must analyze the abundant supply and make the finer adjustment.

The primeval man required, probably, no more than nature's productions just as they grew, and, like the undomesticated animals, might be left to eat these when and as he chose; but when agriculture has multiplied them indefinitely, and commerce has

brought to our doors the products of all climates, and there is no end of skill in combining these, the natural result is that we provide more than the body can dispose of. And so alcoholic drinks are resorted to to assist digestion and gratify the already overstimulated appetite.

The desire for stimulants among the very poor is increased, no doubt, by insufficient nourishment, but the intelligent people must think for the unthinking, and as soon as wholesome food and drink are the fashion for the more intelligent class there will be a change in every class.

Still, intemperate eating and drinking are not the only intemperate habits that seem to be part of our social fabric. There is an incalculable waste of feeling, of emotion, and will, and the power lost in these various channels of life tells the whole story, if we

would trace it back, of the undirected or misdirected energy at the outset. A child whose habits of eating, of sleeping, of dressing, and of talking are controlled by the real needs of life, and regulated with taste and discretion, will need neither the good offices of a temperance society nor legislation to save him from ruin. His salvation was a foregone conclusion, because all the possibilities of his life were led in orderly activity to the threshold of his conscious personality.

What we most need is to be saved from ourselves; or, better to express the same thing, to be lifted into our best selves by adjusting the emotions, appetites, and tendencies when they are plastic and can be moulded.

We are never brave, strong, or just until discipline has made us so. We often believe ourselves all these because we have not been tried enough

to know their want. And happy is that child who has been guided from birth into nature's law so that his discipline has been an unconscious force until habits of obedience to the right in mental, moral, and physical processes have become character.

VII

THE KINDERGARTEN

IN speaking of the kindergarten I shall probably only emphasize what has been "a hundred times repeated to be a hundred times forgotten," for the kindergarten idea has been strongly hinted and more or less believed in for centuries by the advanced thinkers. Plato taught that happiness is an essential atmosphere in early education, and also that every habit of life receives its direction while the child is yet in its unconscious and plastic stage—two truths so full of meaning that we

have not yet learned half their value, and upon which the kindergarten must rest. But this happiness must be an organizer of the child's faculties or they run riot, because activity is the first principle of life, and cannot be repressed with safety.

In order to secure organization, method must be employed, and Froebel's contribution to the new education was the formulating of such methods as would utilize the first instincts of activity in the child to produce or create something which is attractive to him, and which will, by the pleasurable sensation success gives, excite in him the desire to repeat the activity, not aimlessly, but to produce again the result. Thus the unconscious activity becomes a conscious and ever-increasing force, which, by being directed, as it develops, into wholesome channels, prevents that

wholesale and indiscriminate use of power which is such a marked characteristic of the average child.

For the first year this aimless movement is legitimate, for the child is finding himself; but when he has had four or five years of undirected activity he has lost the sweet reasonableness that belongs to perfect childhood; and the awakening faculties, not having been set in orderly relation to life as they appeared, are in a state of confusion, and so are more than he can manage successfully.

The kindergarten offers such forms —beginning with the ball, the simplest of all forms—as the child can understand, and that represent such implements as are needed in mechanical and artistic work. This outward or material side of the kindergarten, precious as it is and full of possibility for the child, is at this stage of its prog-

ress a stumbling-block in our way. Means have been mistaken for ends, and what the children can do with their fingers in the various schools of work is the side which to most people represents *the* kindergarten. The value of the one, two, or three years a child has been in the kindergarten is measured by what is seen to be accomplished in tangible work. In reality, this material and apparent progress is usually the unmistakable evidence that the child's true development has been ignored and set aside for the pretty baubles of paper, clay, and stitched and pricked cards, which have been not the means of unfolding and strengthening his faculties, but they have been *taught* to him at the expense of the most precious thing we can give the child at this age—his awakened responsible personality.

I say responsible personality, but

we must carefully avoid gauging the child's responsibility at this age by our own maturer sense, thus discouraging and perhaps overwhelming the awakening consciousness. But every child can be taught, if he has other children to play with, to regard the rights of his playfellows, and to value his own rights accordingly. He can learn to discriminate between mine and thine better while yet in his babyhood, before he becomes too conscious of self, than he can at any other age, and this discrimination thus fully learned will never leave him, because it is interwoven with his dawning, and so with his fully awakened personality, and has become a part of it.

I criticise the kindergartens freely, because no service rendered any cause is greater than that of helping to keep its ideal clean and high, whatever weakness may creep into the carrying-

out of this ideal ; and also because we are all so liable to test new ideas by our preconceived opinions. And this new thought of education must explode the old idea that the earliest years should be utilized for learning such things as can be taken in at this early age so as to save time later.

There are no facts in the universe so vital to the child as is his knowledge of his relations to the universe, and these he can only truly learn by beginning with those things which are at the level of his comprehension, and with his playfellows to help make his little world. If he leaps over these to learn facts beyond his full mental grasp, he misses just so much of development, and cannot later fully recover this lost ground ; though he usually gratifies his teachers and admiring friends by his ready memorizing of facts that have no interest

because no meaning, to him. This admiration and praise is a powerful stimulus to a bright child, but when such false ambition is once awakened, it cannot be put to sleep, and is fatal to the best growth. And though he may be a prodigy, he will never be a fully rounded character, nor possess the inestimable faculty of making the most and best of any environment into which he may be thrown in this ever-changing and mysterious current which we call life. This most and best in the little every-day concerns of life, that seems insignificant in itself, constitutes the true success, whether in a pecuniary, social, or spiritual sense.

If for a moment we could lay aside the thought of the established routine which we have become accustomed to calling education, we should, I think, easily see that facts about things which

we do not come in contact with are not helpful, while they usurp the place of those things which are needed for every-day life. Do you say they discipline the mind and strengthen memory? This is the reason given for many of the arbitrary rules and studies in the schools, but this is assuming that what is uninteresting and dry is better for development and as a preparation for life than are those things which are gratifying and agreeable. The body can only be fully nourished by eating such food as is pleasant to the taste. The nerves of sensation must be pleasantly excited to secure perfect digestion and assimilation, and it is a serious mistake in our ideas of education that we fail to recognize this beautiful law in intellectual processes.

There is a deal of nonsense about discipline of the mind, of the will, and

of the body. Life is, or ought to be, for all normal human beings a continual discipline of brain, body, and will, and the means for this discipline are furnished in the needs and processes of life. Our failures come from not recognizing these processes, or from being out of place. In either case we are out of harmony with the "inflowing universe," and so fail to get our discipline in God's own way. Then we formulate our arbitrary methods to supply the place of the natural order, very much in the same way as artificial limbs, teeth, and other organs are supplied by science when the natural ones have failed us from carelessness, accident, or disease.

This false and exaggerated idea of our responsibility in furnishing discipline first grew out of the belief that the human being is all wrong till we set him right; and though total

depravity is practically a thing of the past, yet the opposite theory—that the child is right till we lead him wrong by our false estimates of values—has failed to find its way very generally into old avenues of thought; still less have we learned to follow and obey nature, and thereby transform our educational system from arbitrary and unattractive methods to those which meet glad acceptance; glad, because the brain in its natural condition enjoys its supply of knowledge as the body enjoys its food. The flowers bloom and fruits ripen when we make the conditions right for them, and then let them alone to revel in the operations of unerring and beneficent law.

So if children are led from babyhood into observation of and close sympathy with each day, its newness and its opportunities, memory will get

its cultivation, and discipline may be left to itself. That children may observe and enjoy each day's new experience is one of the best reasons for their going when quite young to a kindergarten. The daily routine of the home, when once the nursery is outgrown, does not furnish the miniature world in which the child can, in play, live out his relations with the real world of his future years. Mental vigor must be fed by the doing of things which he comprehends and enjoys doing. Less than this is dulling to the mind.

When a baby begins to creep, no one will doubt but he will find occupation enough for hands and brain, and he should be let alone as much as possible to follow his own sweet will. His discoveries are far more valuable to him than would be anything you can teach him. If he goes to the fire,

do not take him away, but let him see that you are interested in his new-found pleasure. If he finds, of his own accord, that too close a familiarity with the fire is not agreeable, he will learn to avoid it; but watch him and take him away, so that the fire is still an enticing mystery to him, and he feels antagonized, and is stimulated to find an opportunity to elude your watchfulness. Thus power is awakened in a wrong direction. If he finds the stairs, and tries to go up, do not take him away, but teach him how to climb, and also help him to learn that it is not as easy to come down the stairs as it was to go up. Even if you let him get a slight fall with his trying, he will be saved a serious one when you are not by to protect him. You will thus doubly enrich him with the knowledge of his power and how to use it, and you will save him from

the desire to do what you forbid; and, best of all, you will keep that sympathy with him which will make you his first and best counsellor and friend — the most precious place a mother can hold, and a guarantee of safety to her child that no other earthly thing can give.

Every mother who has studied her child knows that there comes a time when he needs a larger environment; needs something more than the home furnishes, and she is wise if she sees coming events casting their shadows before, so as to enlarge the opportunities before the restless activities have exhausted her patience too many times for the child's good or her own peace of mind—before she calls him "naughty" for doing with his might what his hands find to do.

The child is no more to blame for pursuing his investigations with every

opportunity than the tree roots are in displacing the stone or brick of your walk with their silent but irresistible growth. Just at this point is where the home nursery should open its doors into the kindergarten. Here, again, I must criticise most kindergartens for being more school than nursery, and so there is a shock to children who go out from the home fold into these. A strong influence is brought to bear upon private kindergartens to sacrifice "development through play," because the parents want their children to "learn something," which means to learn a few facts to repeat, though these facts have nothing whatever to do with daily needs. And in the public kindergartens the children must be made ready for the next grade, as if the grades were the eternal verities, and to fit these grades the most vital thing in the children's life.

I asked a prominent kindergartner in one of the cities where the kindergarten is part of the public school, how young the children were allowed to come, and she said, "At three; but it is a great mistake, for it keeps the standard so low." This feeling is common in our ranks. "The standard" must be kept up, and the children stretched or shrivelled to meet it. No matter how many children are in the street needing the heart culture of loving care, of bright, clean rooms and harmonizing play, or how many are forced to do things beyond their grasp, the mats must be just so well done and the cards just so well pricked, to keep up the standard, not of development, but of the work done. As in the public school, the system must be glorified at any cost of brain and heart, and the test of value is in the amount and quality of

the work that may be coaxed or forced out of the children, and not in the growth of their faculties, especially if this growth must be waited for. As if the oak must keep pace with the willow!

VIII

THE KINDERGARTEN (*Continued*)

IT still remains true that something must be furnished for the children to do, or they will find it for themselves; and kindergartens will be made the real child gardens they ought to be, just as soon as mothers and fathers understand child nature enough to demand them. And, as a rule, they are better than leaving children in the home after the restless period begins, for companionship is an important part of education at this period, and, with reasonable guidance, will do more for the child, as a rule,

than the wisest parent can do without it. I say, as a rule, for exceptional children must be treated exceptionally, and also because there are kindergartens in name that do more harm than good, and ought to be avoided.

It is of special importance that the father or mother go with the child when he first goes out of the home into the larger nursery—the kindergarten. Do not *send* your child at this age into any new environment. It is his first going out—or ought to be—from under your direct control and influence. He knows no higher authority, and ought not to know any that you do not lead him to.

You cannot put him from the nest as the mother bird does, and trust to the strength of his wing, for a slight wrench in his affections—in his confidence—at this time will do harm. Even if the home control has been very in-

adequate, it is what he was born into, and so, to him, all he has for an anchor. The distinction between *sending* a child to a kindergarten for the first time and leading him there with your own hand may seem slight, but it is real and vital. If you go with him, you take along the current of his previous life, for you have been in one sense his world, and who shall lead him out into broader fields and wider horizon if not the parent? The child must feel that he is led to the new control by and through the wisdom of the parent, and that this control is delegated lovingly and trustfully to the kindergartner for the three hours in the day, and that she is henceforth included in his loyalty to and confidence in his parents, if he is to get the best from his new environment. And a kindergartner must have this delegated power and proof of confidence

direct from the parents before she can do her best work.

There was an illustration of this not long since in one of our best kindergartens, showing how little we understand the mighty power of this first environment of the child's life, and how fully it must be accepted, whether good or bad, as its highest ideal. His rights and duties have been gauged by this ideal, and unless we recognize it and direct our work, leading him up and out from this same standpoint, we shall surely miss the best for him.

A bright little fellow, trebly spoiled by a doting father, a sick mother, and a nurse who knew that every whim of the child must be gratified, had become so unmanageable at the age of four years that he was the terror of the household. The distracted mother and bewildered father were led, by the advice of friends, to send the boy

to a well-known kindergarten. The father took him as he drove to his office, and went in with him, intending to stay but a few minutes, and go to his office, leaving the child with the kindergartner. But the child would not be left, so the father stayed all the morning, though his business was very pressing. The father and the kindergartner consulted, and decided that the boy should be brought the next morning and left. This was accordingly done ; but instead of the father saying to him that he expected him to stay while he went away to his office, the little fellow was adroitly drawn a few steps within, and the door shut between him and his father, who drove immediately away, leaving the screaming, indignant child to the new control and surroundings.

He probably would have screamed just as much if his father had frank-

ly told him that he must stay, and then left him; but the father's right to judge for his child was supreme, and, badly as he had managed this right, no other could take it from him until it was openly delegated. This was a cruel wrench for the child, perhaps crystallizing into permanent character the dominating will and self-assertion which had come into such prominence through lack of wise control and guidance from his babyhood out into boyhood. And then people said he inherited these qualities. He inherited the stuff they were made of, but faculties and habits do not come full-grown. Cultivation gives them their color, and fashions their helpfulness or hinderance in our lives.

The excuse made by the kindergartner for the father's leaving the child so abruptly with her, was that he was so fond of the boy that he could not

bear to see him cry. It seems to me, if we analyze it, we shall find that the father was fond enough of himself to want to avoid the pain the crying would give him, and not courageous enough to bear it for the sake of helping the child by his decision and firmness, for he knew the child would cry, and would have only this comparative stranger to turn to in his grief. Perhaps there was as much rebellion at being thwarted in this unceremonious way as there was grief. I should hope, for the credit of human nature, that there was a fair proportion of indignation; but, whatever the disturbance might be, it was the father's place to meet it, and by the force of his decision give an impetus to the child's development in his new surroundings.

The objection has often been raised against the kindergarten that since

there is no royal road to learning, the child's hard lessons ought to come early, or he will be unable to meet them when they do come; that he is weakened by the easy, happy life of the kindergarten. I think such people confound the really happy child-life with pampered, over-indulged childhood. Disappointment, misunderstanding, and sorrow are just as inseparable from childhood as they are from maturer life, and we fail to read child-life aright when we make light of its troubles because these would not be trouble to us. The little girl who has broken her card, or torn her mat, or had these done for her by a careless or unfortunate playmate, is as truly a sufferer as is the man whose house is robbed or burned. And the effort to put the needle just right into the card or mat is just as great for the child in the kindergarten as is the

mastering of Greek or calculus to the older student. The baby in the kindergarten and the college student need to apply themselves closely to the work in hand, but they need also an atmosphere of happiness to assimilate their work with their lives for the best results. In either case it is true that "everything tires but progress," and progress means that the lesson that was hard yesterday is easy to-day if it was genially accepted and understood at the time. And all the lessons of life are easier for this full and free experience in the beginnings of all that will come later. This is as true of morals as of the intellect, and the kindergarten is the miniature state, where exist rights and duties which are at the child's level, and which cannot be had even in the best homes, because, since the only object of any culture is to live in the best and hap-

piest manner possible with and for each other, children must begin this culture with their playmates, or they are like the boy whose father refused to let him go near the water till he had learned to swim.

Kindergartners ought, by their birthright and by their training, to have an added insight into child nature; but it is too early in the science to have reached the ideal, for we have all been trained more by text-books and formulas than by the living book—the child. And we have also been taught to believe that storing away facts is the process of education; that the alphabet is the beginning of education, and should be followed by the multiplication table and geography, sugar-coated with rhyme, perhaps, as if these unrelated details, which will come of themselves later if the foundation is laid, were life itself, and the little

mariner setting out on his uncertain voyage through life could afford to peril his safety at the outset by all sorts of interests except that of managing his craft!

What the kindergarten can do under favorable conditions was illustrated by a little girl who had had four years of happy kindergarten life, and went into the public school, where she was as happy as she had been before in the kindergarten. Like all children whose school life has been preceded by familiarity with the alphabet of things, she advanced about twice as fast as her class, none of whom had been in a kindergarten. It happened to be in a school where the methods were wise rather than conventional, and the third year she found as much pleasure in computing interest and per cent. and in finding areas as she had earlier in counting her

seeds and sticks or laying her square and triangular tablets. One day she came home radiant. The teacher had put a right-angled scalene triangle upon the board and asked the class to find the area. She found it immediately, and, while waiting for the others, experimented in drawing other triangles like the one in the lesson, and soon had the Pythagorean theorem demonstrated. She saw at once that she had played these figures by laying the tablets on the table in the kindergarten, and now she could demonstrate in figures what she had laid in play. She had never been taught the name Pythagorean in connection with it, but she was as happy in her theoretical demonstration as she had been in the practical representation of it—perhaps as happy as Pythagoras himself, who is said to have sacrificed one hundred bulls in his joy at his discovery.

It was easy for her, because she had been led up to it through successive and natural steps. Her intellect had been strengthened and fortified gradually and healthfully, and study was made pleasant for her, because she had learned the joy of getting new thoughts as she had learned the pleasure of getting new treasures in any other direction, and each step was the natural successor of the previous one. Was it any the less real education for her because she had legitimately and happily reached the abstract through the concrete, the unknown through the known?

There is the ring of true prophecy in Froebel's prediction that the kindergarten would not be fully understood in less than two hundred years.

We have as yet but small comprehension of the glad harmony of life that belongs to the human being in

his full development, and so our preparation for life is still weighted with half-grown and hesitating expectation. And this is no soil in which to plant the new education. When we rise to the heights where our poets would have us, and believe that children do come "trailing clouds of glory," and that for them, as for us, "'tis only God can be had for the asking," we shall plant worthily in our beautiful child garden, and also reap as we sow.

THE END

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